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PATENT

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

In the **PATENT APPLICATION** of:

Wieth et al.

Int'l. Application No.: PCT/EP01/04512

Application No.: Not Yet Known

Confirmation No.: Not Yet Known

Filed: Not Yet Known

For: METHOD AND SYSTEM FOR
DETECTING AND REWARDING THE
RETURNING OF SHOPPING CARTS

Group: Not Yet Known

Examiner: Not Yet Known

Our File: LBP-PT016

(19 355 su)

Date: December 20, 2001

PRELIMINARY AMENDMENT

BOX PCT
Commissioner for Patents
Washington, D.C. 20231

Sir:

Prior to calculation of the filing fee, please amend the above-referenced application as follows in order to eliminate the multiple dependencies from the claims.

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

4. (Amended) A process according to claim 2, further comprising
only generating the second signal B when the shopping cart had been previously used
to go shopping.

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6. (Amended) A method according to claim 1, wherein the customer is individualized using optical recognition systems.

8. (Amended) A method according to claim 1, further comprising
issuing the information medium for the first signal A to the customer when paying at
the shopping center and recording the second signal B on it, when returning a shopping cart
whereby the customer receives a bonus when returning the information medium with the
recorded second signal B.

9. (Amended) A method according to claim 1, further comprising issuing the information medium to the customer when he drives into the customer parking lot of the shopping center, recording the first signal A when he pays at the shopping center, and recording the second signal B when he returns a shopping cart, and the customer receiving a bonus when returning the information medium when he leaves the customer parking lot if the first signal A and the second signal B are recorded on the information medium.

10. (Amended) A method according to claim 1, wherein the signals A and B are saved on a customer-owned data medium.

13. (Amended) A method according to claim 10, wherein signals A and B are saved on the customer-owned data medium with codes or addressing specific to the shopping center.

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14. (Amended) A method according to claim 10, wherein signals A and B are also saved in the shopping center.

15. (Amended) A method according to claim 1, wherein signal A contains, in addition to information that a purchase was made, data on the scope, the makeup and/or the time point of the purchase, and the bonus to be given out to the customer is determined in relation to such data.

16. (Amended) A system for detecting and rewarding the returning of shopping carts to a collection point, comprising first detection means (5) to generate a first signal A during the purchase and second detection means (7) to generate a second signal B when a shopping cart (1) is returned to a collection point (6), and a data processing unit to correlate the two signals A and B to issue a bonus,

the first detection means (5) is for identifying or individualizing a particular customer or an information medium carried by him when generating the first signal A.

17. (Amended) A system to carry out the process according to claim 1, comprising first detection means (5) for generating a first signal A during the purchase and second detection means (7) for generating a second signal B when a shopping cart (1) is returned to a collection point (6), and a data processing unit to correlate the two signals A and B to issue a bonus, wherein

an information medium is provided to be carried by a particular customer to save the first signal A until it is correlated with the second signal B.

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20. (Amended) A system according to claim 16, wherein the information medium is a data medium in the permanent possession of the customer.

21. (Amended) A system according to claim 16, wherein the information medium is a customer-owned mobile telecommunication means, in particular a mobile phone (13).

22. (Amended) A system according to claim 16, wherein the second detection means (18) further includes means for recognizing whether the returned shopping cart (1) has been stored into the shopping cart stacked row provided at the collection point (6) within a prescribed tolerance.

26. (Amended) A system according to claim 23, wherein at least one of the first and/the second optical signal transmitter (15, 18) are made up of IR light sources.

27. (Amended) A system according to claim 23, wherein the first optical signal transmitter (15) comprises a light signal (16) that is modulated according to normal lighting of the shopping center.

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28. (Amended) A system according to claim 23, wherein
the second optical signal transmitter (18) comprises of a light signal (19) that is
modulated according to the normal lighting of the collection point (6).

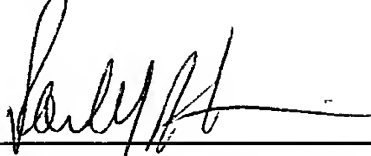
REMARKS

Claims 1-28 are currently pending in this application. By this Preliminary
Amendment, Applicants have removed the multiple dependencies from the claims. A
marked-up version of the claims showing these amendments is also attached. No new matter
has been introduced into the application by this amendment.

Prompt examination of the present application is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

Wieth et al.

By 
Randolph J. Huis, Esquire
Registration No. 34,626
(215) 568-6400

Volpe and Koenig, P.C.
Suite 400, One Penn Center
1617 John F. Kennedy Boulevard
Philadelphia, PA 19103

RJH/srs

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MARKED-UP VERSION OF THE CLAIMS UNDER 37 CFR §1.121

4. (Amended) A process according to [one of] claim[s] 2 [or 3], further comprising

only generating the second signal B when the shopping cart had been previously used to go shopping.

6. (Amended) A method according to [one of] claim[s] 1 [through 4], wherein the customer is individualized using optical recognition systems.

8. (Amended) A method according to [one of] claim[s] 1 [through 4], further comprising

issuing the information medium for the first signal A to the customer when paying at the shopping center and recording the second signal B on it, when returning a shopping cart whereby the customer receives a bonus when returning the information medium with the recorded second signal B.

9. (Amended) A method according to [one of] claim[s] 1 [through 4], further comprising

issuing the information medium to the customer when he drives into the customer parking lot of the shopping center, recording the first signal A when he pays at the shopping center, and recording the second signal B when he returns a shopping cart, and the customer receiving a bonus when returning the information medium when he leaves the customer

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parking lot if the first signal A and the second signal B are recorded on the information medium.

10. (Amended) A method according to [one of] claim[s] 1 [through 4 or 6 through 7], wherein
the signals A and B are saved on a customer-owned data medium.

13. (Amended) A method according to [one of] claim[s] 10 [through 12],
wherein
signals A and B are saved on the customer-owned data medium with codes or
addressing specific to the shopping center.

14. (Amended) A method according to [one of] claim[s] 10 [through 13],
wherein
signals A and B are also saved in the shopping center.

15. (Amended) A method according to [one of] claim[s] 1 [through 14], wherein
signal A contains, in addition to information that a purchase was made, data on the
scope, the makeup and/or the time point of the purchase, and the bonus to be given out to the
customer is determined in relation to such data.

16. (Amended) A system for detecting and rewarding the returning of shopping
carts to a collection point [to carry out the method according to one of claims 1 through 15],

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comprising first detection means (5) to generate a first signal A during the purchase and second detection means (7) to generate a second signal B when a shopping cart (1) is returned to a collection point (6), and a data processing unit to correlate the two signals A and B to issue a bonus,

the first detection means (5) is for identifying or individualizing a particular customer or an information medium carried by him when generating the first signal A.

17. (Amended) A system to carry out the process according to [one of] claim[s] 1 [through 5], comprising first detection means (5) for generating a first signal A during the purchase and second detection means (7) for generating a second signal B when a shopping cart (1) is returned to a collection point (6), and a data processing unit to correlate the two signals A and B to issue a bonus, wherein

an information medium is provided to be carried by a particular customer to save the first signal A until it is correlated with the second signal B.

20. (Amended) A system according to claim 16 [and/or 17], wherein the information medium is a data medium in the permanent possession of the customer.

21. (Amended) A system according to claim 16 [and/or 17], wherein the information medium is a customer-owned mobile telecommunication means, in particular a mobile phone (13).

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22. (Amended) A system according to claim 16 [and/or 17], wherein the second detection means (18) further includes means for recognizing whether the returned shopping cart (1) has been stored into the shopping cart stacked row provided at the collection point (6) within a prescribed tolerance.

26. (Amended) A system according to [one of] claim[s] 23 [through 25], wherein at least one of the first and/the second optical signal transmitter (15, 18) are made up of IR light sources.

27. (Amended) A system according to [one of] claim[s] 23 [through 25], wherein the first optical signal transmitter (15) comprises a light signal (16) that is modulated according to normal lighting of the shopping center.

28. (Amended) A system according to [one of] claim[s] 23 [through 25 or 27],
wherein

the second optical signal transmitter (18) comprises a light signal (19) that is modulated according to the normal lighting of the collection point (6).